

Five Pathways for Managing Stress



Consider five pathways for managing stress: Focus, Interpret, Prepare, Process, and Distract. “Focus” means giving attention to what you can control (e.g., finding ways to make dollars stretch further so you worry less about bills). “Interpret” means redefining stress (e.g., looking on the bright side of a problem). “Prepare” means taking action to ward off stress in the future (e.g., doing holiday shopping early). “Process” means communication

(e.g., discussing stress and solutions with others). “Distract” means diverting attention from the stress (e.g., listening to pleasant music, taking a walk, etc.). When under stress, consider these pathways of intervention and you are more likely to find the one that works best.

When Stalking Comes to Work

No employee wants to bring problems to work, but some problems may not stay away—like a stalker. Have you feared for your safety because of someone making unwanted phone calls, sending unsolicited letters or e-mails, or following you, perhaps at work, for no legitimate reason? Stalking is a serious criminal offense with over three million victims per year. Stalkers often appear at work because the victim must show up there. About one-fourth of stalking victims have experienced lost income or work time dealing with a stalker. Workplace stalking is not your fault—accountability lies with the stalker, not you the victim. Seek and expect help in the same way that you would expect for any threat or risk occurring at work. The worst thing you can do is try to handle this problem alone.



Improving Your Relationship

Do you enjoy more good times than bad with your significant other? Do you know your partner's hopes, dreams, and fears? Do you talk through conflict rather than bury it in silence in order to keep the peace? How you answer these sorts of questions may point to whether you could stand a bit more happiness between the two of you. Problems in these areas are treatable, but they often fester for years. Don't remain frustrated. Consider moving your relationship forward from “so-so” to “doing great” by using self-help, couples counseling, or another enrichment plan.

Internet Gaming Disorder

Internet Gaming Disorder (IGD) affects 3 to 10 percent of internet and video gamers—mostly young adults. Although not yet a mental disorder, IGD is characterized by preoccupation with internet gaming; feeling unable to stop gaming, feeling guilty because one can't quit, experiencing neglect of physical health, decreased academic performance and a decline in social and normal recreational pursuits. IGD is treatable, but seek help with an assessment from a counselor you trust. Many online internet help resources are not reliable, and it's better to be followed by a professional who can evaluate and monitor your progress in recovery. Your EAP can assist you in locating a counselor who specializes in IGD.

Frontline Employee

Show Management Your Commitment

Ask managers what they value in employees and you'll hear "dependable," "self-motivated," "rises to the occasion," or "has a positive attitude." These all represent "commitment." Are you demonstrating behaviors that prove the commitment you feel? The following behaviors show you're an engaged and committed employee: 1) takes initiative (makes the first move to get something done), 2) keeps the boss informed on progress, 3) spots problems and solves them, and 4) shows passion and demonstrates eagerness for the work. In order to show your commitment, take extra steps to modify existing negative behaviors : 1) does work but lacks energy and devotion to the results, 2) ignores problems in favor leaving it to others to find the fix, 3) fails to communicate or keep the boss informed, 4) rarely offers up new ideas, and 5) appears willing, but lacks gusto.



Have an I-Thou Conversation

Workplace conflicts are quite normal. However, they deserve speedy attention because they are easier to resolve early-on. Don't fear conflict. View it as an opportunity to advance your relationship. Learn the "I-Thou" approach when engaging to resolve differences. The idea is simple: Use an attitude that views your coworker as a whole person with a desire equal to yours to have compatible, mutually beneficial relationships at work. Seeing him or her as a unique and valuable person with hopes, dreams, strengths, and fears just like you turns conflict into an opportunity for deeper understanding of each other. You'll easily resist becoming workplace foes. Twentieth century philosopher Martin Buber first wrote about this idea in human interaction. He saw it as the most meaningful way humans can interact and value each other. It works beautifully in the 21st century workplace, and your organization will reap the benefits of it.

Finding Money for Your IRA

Finding money to sock away in your IRA can be a problem, but the answer, if it exists—and it almost always does—usually lies in lifestyle choices. You must save first and avoid spending all your money. You are bombarded by "live large" marketing messages. Can you resist them? For example, you may need to avoid the lure of expensive autos and stop avoiding the math that proves it is more economical to make repairs on a car you own for a while. Examine your lifestyle to see where you are sabotaging right now your ability to retire in the distant future. Refresh your memory of the power of compound interest, then seek to maximize your IRA. Be diligent about retirement now, and you will not panic about it later.



Overcoming Fear of Change

Fear is one of the most significant hurdles with upcoming organizational change. To face change with determined fortitude: Accept that fear of change is normal and don't deny your concern about it. Try "moving your fear to paper" by writing down concerns. Consider each concern's potential solution. Small things count—losing an office, giving up a pretty commute, coming home later—see if you can identify exactly what the change may bring. Find supportive friends or a counselor with whom you can discuss concerns. You'll discover solutions and enlightened coping strategies for virtually any problem or issue. Resist buying into rumors at the water cooler that can stoke more fear. Instead, bring concerns to your supervisor and compare them with official information sources. Read about how to cope with change. The field of literature on this topic is huge, and reading may be the fastest way to feel empowered and less fearful. Staying on top of your fear by remaining proactive and planning your approach to change will help you stay positive. You are no stranger to change, so consider any past experiences where you successfully overcame major changes that occurred in your life. Ultimately, coping with fear of change is about your taking control of your attitude and being determined with a personal set of adaption strategies that will help you benefit from new experiences that are coming your way.